

Josiah Butler House
23 Arnold Street
Providence
Providence County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-190

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
90-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

JOSIAH BAKER HOUSE

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
90-

Address: 23 Arnold Street, Providence, Providence County,
Rhode Island. Plat 16, lot 301

Present Owner: Eight heirs of the estate of Sylvia E. Castlebury

Present Occupant: Joseph A. Rogers

Present Use: Dwelling

Brief Statement This is an example of a medium-sized house built
of Significance: about 1800 with excellent exterior detail.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1795 Christopher Arnold sells to Josiah Baker for 80¢ a certain lot of land bounded: S by Arnold Street; W by Geo and Reuben Wrightman; N by heirs of Joshua Ashton, E by James Arnold, being lot #9 in plat of Chris Arnold on N side of Arnold Street . . . Deed Book 56, page 214, in Providence City Hall.
- 1798 U.S. Tax List Josiah Baker, lot S on Arnold Street 45'; W on J Larcher 75'. Valuation \$200.
- 1814 Mss. tax descriptions in the Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, for the 1814 Providence direct tax to the federal government, Josiah Baker..lot 80' x---. House 35' x 30'.. brick plated.
- 1834 Josiah Baker et al sell for \$900 to Nathan Mason... lot with house and other improvements bounded: S by Arnold Street 45'; W by G and R Wrightman; N by heirs of Joshua Upton (Ashton?) 40'; E by land of grantee 77'...Deed Book 65, page 89, in Providence City Hall.
- 1844 Nathan Mason sells the above property to Abby Maxson for \$1500.
- 1850 Abby Maxson sells to John Shaw a certain lot of land bounded: S by Arnold Street 40'8"; W by

Menzies Sweet 73'; N by Resolved Waterman 36';
E by Hezekiah Anthony 32' 8"...Deed Book 92, page
236, in Providence City Hall.

- 1853 John M Shaw sells for \$2100 the above property to
Phillip F W Peck, Deed Book 133, page 263, in
Providence City Hall.
- 1854 PFW Peck sells to Charles Peck.. "the same premises
conveyed to me by John M Shaw in 1853...Deed Book
135, page 245, in Providence City Hall.
- 1889 Louis W Peck et al, heirs of Charles M Peck sell
to Adrian Peck widow the same property as described
in Deed Book 92, page 236. . .Deed Book 354, page
242, in Providence City Hall.
- 1889 Adrian F Peck, widow to Daniel Diggins. . .Deed
Book 353, page 127, in Providence City Hall.
- 1889 Daniel Diggins to Abbie L Hobbs, widow. . .Deed
Book 355, page 181, in Providence City Hall.
- 1890 Abbie L Hobbs to William H Herrick. . .Deed Book
357, page 214, in Providence City Hall.
- 1892 William H Herrick sells to Honorah Jaccheri a
certain lot of land with buildings bounded S by
Arnold Street 40' 8"; E by A & J Pike 32' 8"; N
by Resolved Waterman 36 1/2'; W by Menzies Sweet
73', being the same conveyed to grantor by Abby
L Hobbs in 1889...Deed Book 377, page 323 in
Providence City Hall.

The property was taxed to the following persons in the
year designated:

1901 The Justin Realty Co.	1909 E A Harrell & wf Sylvia to 1915
1915 Sylvia E Castlebury	1939 S E Castlebury Estate

2. Date of erection: Between 1798 and 1814, probably soon
after 1798.

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Gowdey
for the Providence Preservation Society
February 1962

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a typical, medium-sized brick house, two stories high and five bays wide, built about 1800. It has excellent exterior detail including a pedimented entrance frontispiece and the unusual pediments over the lower front windows.
2. Condition of fabric: This house is in poor condition with some walls out of plumb and the woodwork dilapidated and unpainted. A coat of stucco has been added to the front and to parts of the other sides which is thicker than the original projection of the window frames making them recessed below the surface of the stucco.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: 35' (five bays) x 30', two stories high, facing south.
2. Foundations: Brownstone in front, brick on sides and rear visible on exterior.
3. Wall construction: Brick, partly stuccoed over later.
4. Stoops: Modern wood entrance stoop, three steps high.
5. Chimneys: Two brick chimneys in end walls.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doors and doorways: Main entrance on south front, six-panel wood door, flat, sunk panels, Greek Revival flattened ogee moldings; frontispiece with fluted pilasters, pediment, semicircular fan with carved key block. Side door on east, eight-panel wood door, raised panels, simplified molded doorway with horizontal top light.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Four over four light double hung windows on front and parts of the other sides apparently not original; some original 12 over 12 light double hung windows remain on sides. Shutter hardware on most windows, some adjustable louvered shutters in place. Window heads on second floor windows meet roof cornice. Lower windows on front have unusually elegant pediments with fret bed molds.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Gable roof, asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice: Molded wood cornice, crown mold returned slightly at gable ends.

C. Description of Interior: Not available for inspection.

D. Site : Small, level lot of land in a residential section; house on the sidewalk line on the south front; narrow yard on east side with walk to side door; small rear yard.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect
National Park Service
February 1962.